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# Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 22317 221133Z

73
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

ACDA-05 /062 W
---------- 081835
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3154
INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL UDORN
AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 22317

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TH, US
SUBJECT: FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT KHOMAN ADVOCATES HALT TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL

REF: BANGKOK 15369

SUMMARY: IN PAPER DELIVERED AT SEMINAR ON ASIAN BUSINESS IN HONG KONG OCTOBER 21 FORMER THAI FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT KHOMAN CRITICIZED RTG INSISTENCE ON WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES FROM THAILAND BY NEXT MARCH. HE SAID THIS ACTION THROWS AWAY POSSIBILITY OF SECURING ANY QUID PRO QUO IN RETURN FROM THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. HE CALLED FOR SCRAPPING OF THIS DECLARATION AND A HALT TO TROOP WITHDRAWALS. THANAT HOLDS ESSENTIALLY MAVERICK VIEWS ON THAI FOREIGN POLICY IN PRESENT CONTEXT, AND THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT HIS VIEWS WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON RTG. HIS REMARKS ARE THOSE OF AN EXPERIENCED THAI STATESMAN AND ARE REPORTED IN SOME DETAIL FOR THAT REASON. END SUMMARY.

1. IN PAPER PRESENTED OCTOBER 21 TO SEMINAR IN HONG
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 22317 221133Z

KONG ON ASIAN BUSINESS SPONSORED BY FINANCIAL TIMES OF

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LONDON, THANAT KHOMAN, FORMER THAI FOREIGN MINISTER, SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. HIS REMARKS WERE ESSENTIALLY CONSISTENT WITH STATEMENTS HE HAD MADE IN AN INTERVIEW WITH BANGKOK POST JULY 28 (REFTEL) AND WITH COMMENTS HE MADE LAST WEEK TO DCM, WHICH HAVE BEEN SUMMARIZED AND POUCHED TO EA/TB. WHILE AMCONGEN HONG KONG WILL NO DOUBT REPORT ON SIGNIFICANT PAPERS DELIVERED TO SEMINAR, THANAT REMARKS MADE IN HONG KONG ARE OF SUFFICIENT GENERAL INTEREST THAT THE EMBASSY SUMMARIZES HEREWITH KEY POINTS WHICH WERE PUBLISHED IN BANGKOK POST OCTOBER 22.

2. REFERRING TO SITUATION IN WHICH SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS FIND THEMSELVES IN WAKE OF EVENTS IN INDO-CHINA, THANAT STATED, QTE...IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT, NOW MORE THAN AT ANY TIME OF THEIR HISTORY, THERE EXISTS AN IMPERIOUS NEED TO PUT THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER, TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL UNITY AND MAINTAIN CONSTANT ALERTNESS AND VIGILANCE. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETECT THE TEL-TALE SIGNS OF MOVES AIMING AT ENDANGERING THEIR SECURITY AND WELL-BEING AND TAKE IN GOOD TIME MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD THEM...

3. QTE FOR THAILAND IN PARTICULAR, IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS ISSUED A UNILATERAL DECLARATION REQUIRING AMERICAN TROOPS WITHDRAWAL BY NEXT MARCH WITHOUT FIRST DISCUSSING AND NEGOTIATING WITH THE PARTIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, THUS THROWING AWAY THE POSSIBILITIES OF SECURING NECESSARY QUID PRO QUO. IN SO DOING IT IS DOING A DISSERVICE NOT ONLY TO THE COUNTRY BUT ALSO TO THE ENTIRE REGION WHICH, IN THE PROCESS, LOSES THE CHANCES OF ACQUIRING A NEGOTIATED PEACE AND SECURITY.

4. QTE IN FACT, THE EXISTING REALITIES REQUIRE NOT ONLY THE SCRAPPING OF THAT UNINSPIRED UNILATERAL DECLARATION BUT ALSO THE HALT OF FOREIGN FORCES WITHDRAWAL WHICH SHOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER THE NEW MARXIST REGIMES AGREE TO NORMALIZE THEIR RELATIONS AND LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE REST OF ASIA. OTHERWISE, THERE IS NOT VALID REASON FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 22317 221133Z

THAILAND TO PRESENT HANOI WITH WHAT IT HAS BEEN CLAMOURING FOR YEARS WHILE IT GIVES NOTHING WORTHWHILE IN RETURN....

5. QTE.... IN THIS CONNECTION REPORTS FROM NEUTRAL SOURCES SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THE LEADERS OF THE NEW REGIMES IN INDO-CHINA ARE INCLINED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, TO RESORT TO THE TIME-TESTED METHOD OF INTERNAL SUBVERSION WHICH THEY USED WITH GREAT PROFICIENCY IN SOUTH VIET-NAM,

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RATHER THAN OPEN ARMED AGGRESSION WHICH INVOLVES GREATER
RISKS AND ALSO BECAUSE THE SITUATION IS QUITE DIFFERENT,
AND CLAIMS OF A CIVIL WAR TO "LIBERATE" BRETHERN WOULD
NOT VERY WELL STICK.

6. QTE THAT MAY EXPLAIN WHY THE GROUND IS BEING PREPARED
FOR LAOS TO STAKE CLAIMS AGAINST NORTHEAST THAILAND, EVEN
THOUGH THAT COUNTRY CANNOT EVEN FEED ITS OWN PEOPLE AND
HAS TO DEPEND ON FOOD SUPPLIES FROM THAILAND. SUCH CLAIMS,
IF IT MATERIALIZES (SIC) WOULD GO AGAINST ETHNIC AND
HISTORIC FACTS, AS THERE ARE ONLY FIVE KNOWN RACES IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE THAI, MON, MALAY, BURMAN, AND KHMER.
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A LAO OR LAOTIAN RACE, WHICH
IS BUT A BRANCH OF THE THAI RACE, WHOSE OFFSHOOTS MAY BE
FOUND IN NORTH VIET-NAM, SHAN STATE, ASSAM, LAOS, AND,
OF COURSE, THAILAND. IN SPITE OF THIS DISCREPANCY, THEN
MARXIST REGIMES, WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN FOR THEIR METICULOUS
RESPECT FOR SCIENTIFIC FACTS, MAY NOT HESITATE TO PRESS
THE CLAIM AND, IN SEEKING TO REALIZE IT, MAY RESORT TO
SUBVERSION COMBINED WITH INSTIGATION OF INSURGENCY AND
EVEN THE USE OF NAKED FORCE...END QTE.

6. COMMENT: THANAT HOLDS ESSENTIALLY MAVERICK VIEWS ON
THAI FOREIGN POLICY IN PRESENT CONTEXT. THERE IS LITTLE
PROSPECT THAT HIS VIEWS WILL HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ON THE RTG BUT HIS REMARKS ARE OF SUFFICIENT INTEREST TO
PRESENT THEM HERE AT SOME LENGTH. TEXT OF THANAT'S
SPEECH WILL BE POUCHED WHEN AVAILABLE.
WHITEHOUSE

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